

POSTAGE ON LETTERS WRITTEN BY THE BLIND.

JUNE 11, 1898.—Referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

Mr. CLARK, of Iowa, from the Committee on the Post-Office and Post-Roads, submitted the following

REPORT.

[To accompany H. R. 4304.]

The Committee on the Post-Office and Post-Roads, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 4304) regulating the postage on letters written by the blind, have had the same under consideration and beg to submit herewith their favorable report upon the measure, as amended.

This is a bill to permit letters written in point print or raised characters by and to the blind to go as third-class matter instead of at the rate of first-class matter as now. The point or raised characters used by the blind require a peculiar paper and large spacing, so that letters written by the blind cost them more to transmit than letters in script and typewriting. That the most unfortunate of mankind should have a higher rate of postage to pay than the capable and the strong seems an undue hardship. In 1890 there were over 50,000 blind people in the United States.

The Third Assistant Postmaster-General has thus written the committee:

POST-OFFICE DEPARTMENT,
OFFICE THIRD ASSISTANT POSTMASTER-GENERAL,
Washington, D. C., April 23, 1898.

SIR: Upon reconsidering the bill (H. R. 4304) "Regulating the postage on letters written by the blind," which you some time ago submitted to this Department for its views thereon, I am inclined to think that the measure is one that should be adopted. It seems a hardship that the blind, who can not use the ordinary appliances for writing their letters, should be unduly taxed on that account, as is somewhat the case under the present law; and the bill referred to simply removes this hardship. The quantity of matter, too, that is sent by the blind in the mails is not excessive, and therefore the passage of the bill will not result in any appreciable loss of postal revenue.

I suggest, however, that the bill be modified so as to require that all messages in point print mailed by the blind be unsealed, and be chargeable with postage at the rate provided for third-class matter.

Respectfully, yours,

JOHN A. MERRITT,
Third Assistant Postmaster-General.

Hon. E. F. LOUD,
*Chairman Committee on the Post-Office and Post-Roads,
House of Representatives, Washington, D. C.*

The bill has been amended pursuant to the recommendation of the Post-Office Department.

The committee recommends its passage.